

RD27768-3
GB3-0083

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 45 are pending in the present Application. Claims 5, 7, 10, 11 and 16 have been canceled and claims 1, 7, 8, 20, 21 and 37 have been amended, leaving Claims 1 – 4, 6, 8 – 9, 12 – 15, 17 – 21, and 37 – 45 for consideration upon entry of the present Amendment. The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowability of Claim 7 if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have accordingly cancelled Claim 7 and incorporated its limitations into Claim 1. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the Examiner has stated that Claim 20 recites the limitation “said inert carrier gas” in line 2.

Claim 20 has been amended to correct for an inadvertent typographical error. Claim 20 has now been amended to depend from Claim 13. The rejection is therefore moot and Applicants respectfully request a withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Amended Claims

Claim 1 has now been amended to better define the invention by incorporating the subject matter of Claim 7 as originally filed.

Claims 8 and 9 have been amended to better define the invention and to correct for proper antecedent basis.

Claim 21 and 37 has been amended to better define the invention. The subject matter of this amendment can be found in Claim 7 as originally filed and hence no new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

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It is believed that the foregoing amendments and remarks fully comply with the Office Action and that the claims herein should now be allowable to Applicants. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance is requested.

If there are any additional charges with respect to this Amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by Cantor Colburn LLP.

Respectfully submitted,

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